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THE ROLE OF JOINT AND COMBINED EXERCISES IN
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND'S
(USCINCCENT'S) PEACETIME STRATEGY AND PREPARATION FOR WAR

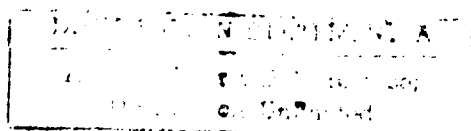
by

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Colonel, United States Marine Corps

A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract of

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Joint and Combined military exercises played a pivotal but little understood role in USCINCCENT'S peacetime strategy. They also contributed, both directly and indirectly, to USCINCCOM'S impressive successes in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The experiences and lessons learned by the USCINCCOM staff pertaining to the value of these exercises are applicable to all unified commands. However, with the end of the war and a perceived drastic reduction in the threat to the security of the United States, future exercise programs are at risk. The conclusion is made that joint and combined exercises are critical to the successful execution of U.S. military strategy and thus must be retained, resourced by the various armed services and funded by OSD.

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Thanks to all the "Jawbonies" of USCENTCOM'S CCJ3-E for their assistance in gathering the reference material for and checking the sanity of this paper, but especially for three great years of hard work, loyalty and support: before, during and after Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

The contents of this paper reflect my memory of events and activities as they occurred. References to sources other than my personal notebooks are reflected in End Notes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	1
Background	3
Pre-Desert Shield/Pre-Desert Storm	11
Desert Shield/Desert Storm	16
Post-Desert Shield/Post-Desert Storm	28
Conclusion	33

INTRODUCTION

Joint and combined military exercises played a pivotal but little understood role in the peacetime strategy of the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM). Exercises also contributed, both directly and indirectly, to USCENTCOM's impressive successes in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Lieutenant General Charles A. Horner, Commander U.S. Air Forces, Central Command, described one aspect of this contribution when he wrote,

"Regional exercise scenarios gave us the opportunity to closely analyze our potential adversaries. Understanding the enemy gave us the opportunity to exploit his weaknesses. With strength against weakness being the prudent way to go, we placed a great deal of emphasis on our ability to operate at night. Our sophisticated night capabilities proved to be an obstacle Iraq was never able to overcome.

Annual and biannual exercises such as GALLANT KNIGHT, GALLANT EAGLE, BRIGHT STAR, QUICK FORCE, BLUE FLAG and RED FLAG paved the way to realistic and pragmatic expectations. As the years passed, we honed our ability to conduct air operations and fight in the desert and grew in our understanding of the uniqueness of our area of responsibility. Deployments into the desert gave us an understanding of the effects of heat, sand and dust on our personnel and equipment and allowed us to make adequate preparations to overcome the elements.

Also early on, we realized the importance of "jointness." Therefore, we trained and planned together with our sister services. This togetherness resulted in joint concepts and tactics that were to be major factors in the prosecution of Desert Storm. While nothing could have fully prepared us for what was to happen in August 1990, the realistic training of the 1980s had created a nucleus of trained specialists ready to react to the largest deployment tasking ever experienced by the Air Force."¹

These and other exercise-related lessons learned by USCENTCOM and its component and subordinate commands are applicable to all unified commands. Unfortunately, with the end of the war and a

perceived drastic reduction in the threat to the security of the United States, exercise programs are suddenly at risk. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), faced with rapidly declining budgets and significant force reductions, proposed a commensurate reduction in exercise funding. To fill the resulting gap the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) suggested expanded use of simulations, command post exercises (CPXs) and computer assisted wargames. The services, too and the Air Force in particular, faced with conflicting priorities, reduced Department of Defense (DOD) budgets and force reductions, pleaded limited ability to support.

USCENTCOM as well as all unified commands are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand the new world economic, political and military environment dictates significant U.S. military force reductions. On the other hand we have a national military strategy that places a premium on forward presence. Unlike in the past, all unified commanders now face to some degree the same problem that CENTCOM has dealt with, i.e., how to maintain a presence in their areas of responsibility (AOR) with minimum assigned forces. For USCENTCOM, joint and combined exercises have met the need and can do so for other commands as well. But, for the same to happen in the future, solutions must be found for projected funding and force allocation shortfalls.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the contribution made by joint and combined exercises and by the people who planned, executed and evaluated them to USCENTCOM in the preparation for and conduct of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. The paper will

first present a brief background on USCENTCOM's mission, make up and importance to the United States (US) and the rest of the world. Next, in the section entitled "Pre-Desert Shield/Pre-Desert Storm, it will outline the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Central Command's (USCINCCENT's) peacetime strategy and details of USCENTCOM's joint and combined exercise and training program. "Desert Shield/Desert Storm" will continue with a description of the unique contribution of the CENTCOM Exercise Division (J3-E) during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. "Post-Desert Shield/Post-Desert Storm will continue with a description of the post conflict resurgence of the exercise program. Finally, in "Conclusion," this paper will describe the difficulties associated with implementing current and future exercises.

BACKGROUND

USCENTCOM was established in 1983. Evolving from the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF), it was created to improve the regional balance in Southwest Asia (SWA) and strengthen U.S. force projection capabilities. USCENTCOM's AOR includes 18 countries of disparate political, economic, cultural and geographic make-up. Europe, Asia and Africa all join to form a remarkable continental intersection that has been crossed and contested by invading forces for centuries. Three of the world's major religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islaam) have their roots in the region. This cultural diversity has filled the region's history with tribal, regional and national conflicts. Seeds sown in past centuries have given rise

to the regional and internal conflicts of the present, e.g. the Iran-Iraq war, Lebanon, the Shiite-Sunni conflict, the Kurdish problem, Desert Shield/ Desert Storm, etc. The region's blend of cultures and ideologies continues to make the area volatile and unpredictable.

Today this territory remains essential to U.S. security. The economies of the U.S. and its western allies depend on Arabian Gulf oil where 70% of free world's reserves lie. The U.S., Europe and Asia rely on gulf oil to meet a considerable share of their demand. About 40% of U.S. consumption comes from sources outside CONUS with 20% from the Gulf. According to recent Department of Energy studies, U.S. dependence on and consumption of Gulf oil is destined to grow.

The area also sits astride the major maritime trade routes which link the Middle East, Europe, South and East Asia and the Western Hemisphere (Figure 1). These strategic waterways facilitate the flow of world commerce vital to the survival of many nations. Ships plying these routes and transiting the maritime choke points of the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Bab el Mandeb carry the myriad of commodities that fuel world trade. The Suez Canal alone handles more than 21,000 vessels annually. In time of peace these waterways are important; in time of conflict they are vital since they provide the strategic lifeline essential to the timely deployment and sustainment of Free World Forces. The only alternative to the Suez and Bab el Mandeb Sea Lines of

Communication (SLOCs) is to transit around the southern tip of the African Continent.²

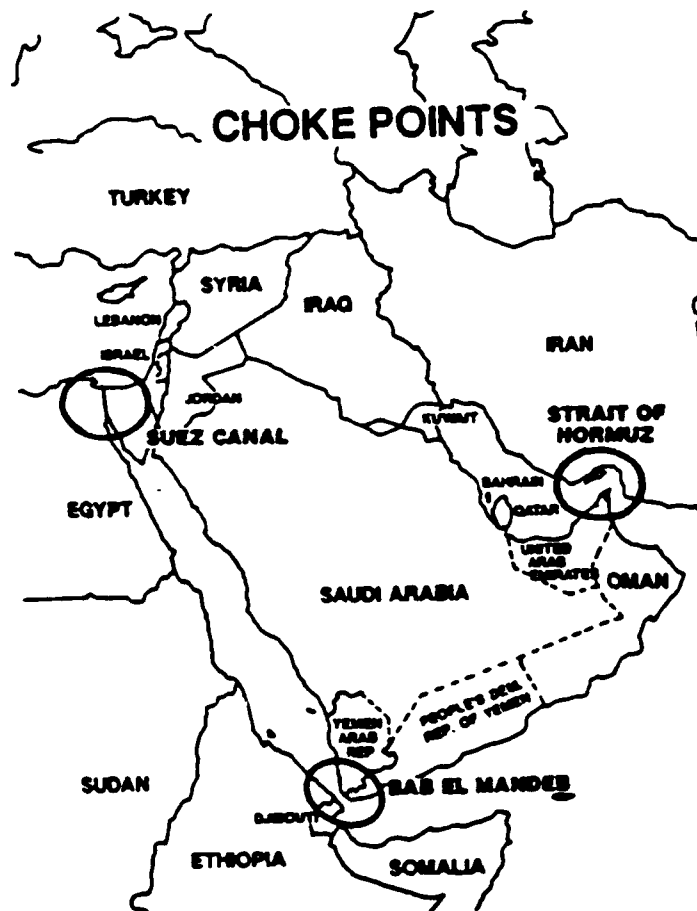


Figure 1.

In its early days, much of USCENTCOM's strategic focus was on the Soviet threat to the region. The command recognized that, while the area was vital to interests of the U.S. and other Free World nations, it was also of strategic importance to the Soviet Union. Soviet objectives in the region were seen to focus on obtaining alternate warm water ports, oil resources, land access and control of lines of communication to these resources and their

denial to others. Hence, USCENTCOM's strategy was designed to deny Soviet attainment of these goals.³

However, during his statement to the Congress in February 1990, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander-in-Chief, United States Central Command, indicated a changing strategic environment.

"Of particular interest to USCENTCOM is the perceived reduction of the immediate Soviet military threat to Southwest Asia. Ongoing political and domestic events within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are having a moderating effect on U.S.-Soviet relations. Despite the probable change in Soviet intentions, however, its capability to employ forces in our AOR cannot be completely ignored. A significant U.S.-Soviet postured ground force imbalance remains, and the Soviets continue to maintain a strong naval presence in the area. Nonetheless, the prospect for a near-term, direct U.S.-Soviet military confrontation are low. Of more immediate concern is the fact that the Soviets are continuing efforts designed to expand their influence throughout this region. Soviet military and economic assistance to many AOR countries continued to counter U.S. initiatives. They are engaged in ongoing diplomatic efforts to improve relations, increase contacts or open embassies in countries where in the past they were unwelcome. Since 1985, the Soviets have established diplomatic relations with Oman, UAE, and Qatar and renewed relations with Egypt and Iran. Normalized relations with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are a distinct possibility. The U.S. must be willing to demonstrate steadfastness and commitment in order to counter Soviet initiatives in the region, including their penchant for exploiting our friends' doubts concerning U.S. resolve.

An increasingly significant threat to the military balance in the region is the emergence of long-range missiles and nuclear, biological and chemical arms development and proliferation. The employment of chemical munitions as anti-personnel weapons and the extensive use of SCUD missiles in the "War of the Cities" have driven more moderate non-belligerent neighbors to perceive a need to obtain similar capabilities as deterrents. This accelerated upgrading in the quality, lethality and range of these types of arms contributes to both military and political instability."⁴

General Schwarzkopf went on to say that, given this situation, the successful accomplishment of the USCENTCOM mission required three mutually supporting strategies: one for peacetime, one for regional contingencies and one for global warfare. He further described how CENTCOM's peacetime strategy rested on three pillars: presence, security assistance and combined exercises. Unfortunately, while not broken, two of these pillars were providing decreasing support. While the Joint Task Force Middle East's (JTFME's) continued conduct of Earnest Will Operations had reassured regional friends, the 'presence' force had been reduced considerably since the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

Like forward presence, the security assistance pillar was not seen as carrying its full share of the strategic load. In CENTCOM's view, declining security assistance levels since 1985 threatened the reputation of the U.S. as a reliable partner and fostered the impression that the U.S. was retreating from its regional responsibilities. U.S. programs did not provide for the basic military needs of our friends in the region. Unfortunately, while America erroneously saw itself as the region's sole potential benefactor, the vast oil wealth of some of these countries enabled them to choose other sources and consequently alternative diplomatic relationships.

The shortcomings of the first two pillars left combined exercises as the principal means for maintaining visibility and demonstrating U.S. resolve and our on-going commitment to the area. With few permanently assigned forces, military-to-military

relations developed during U.S.-Host nation exercises fostered increased cooperation and reflected CENTCOM's ability and intent to support regional stability while working together in a coalition environment.

The changing strategic environment plus guidance from higher authorities provided the framework within which the USCENTCOM exercise program was developed. The Goldwater/Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 led to a JCS Exercise Program Review in 1988. This review resulted in recommendations, (a) to develop a joint training process that identified joint training requirements through Joint Mission Essential Task Lists (JMETLs) and (b) to build CINC Joint Training Plans (JTPs) that identified joint training requirements and provided justification for exercise funding. These recommendations were formalized in JCS Memorandum of Policy (MOP) 200 which defined joint training roles, established methodology, tasked CINCs to develop JTPs and established requirements for review and analysis. The results of this effort were reflected in the annually updated, JCS Five-Year exercise program.

The CENTCOM Joint Exercise and Training Program closely paralleled and supported this joint training process. USCENTCOM exercises were an integrated part of the JCS Five-Year Exercise Program and were designed and planned to ensure consistency with JCS exercise planning guidance as well as conform to the guidelines established by the JCS for the conduct of joint and/or combined exercises, and meet command objectives set forth in the JTP.

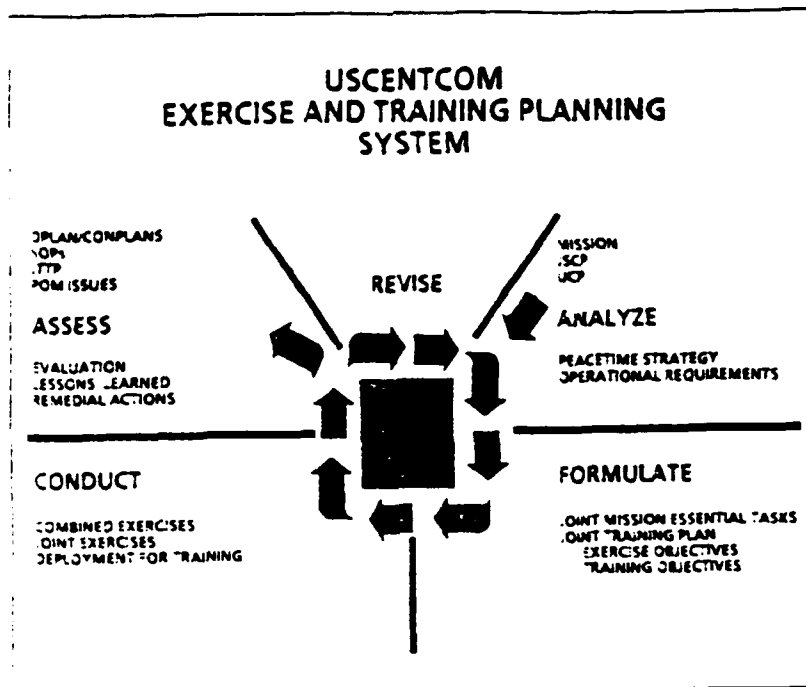


Figure 2

The first step in the development of the USCENTCOM exercise program was to analyze the command's missions as directed in the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) and determine command objectives and strategy (Figure 2). This involved developing a strategy for each AOR country. Each strategy included overall goals and objectives as determined by the political and military situations in each country. The USCENTCOM JMETL; composed of the broad joint mission areas and essential joint and/or combined operational tasks which were required to meet

states objectives, was based on the CINC's stated peacetime strategy and operational requirements.

The second step was to develop the JTP. This required identifying exercise and training objectives for each country in the AOR, matching essential joint and/or combined operational tasks with specific exercises and training events, and codifying the schedule of exercises and training events.

As mentioned earlier, the process for development of the JTP evolved directly from the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986. Intended to correct previous deficiencies in the U.S. military's conduct of joint operations, it gave the war fighting CINCs new powers and responsibilities for training and exercises. At that time, linking exercise objectives directly to JMETLs seemed to be in keeping with the intent of Congress and provided a basis for funding justification. Since Desert Storm, however, this process threatens to have a detrimental impact that will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

The remaining steps were to plan each exercise and training event in detail, conduct them according to the schedule, assess the ability to perform the required tasks, and revise the Joint Exercise and Training Program as necessary. The assessment and revision phases included internal and/or external evaluations and identification of changes to war plans, force structure, operating procedures, and budget inputs, as well as the next JTP.

EXERCISE PLANNING SEQUENCE

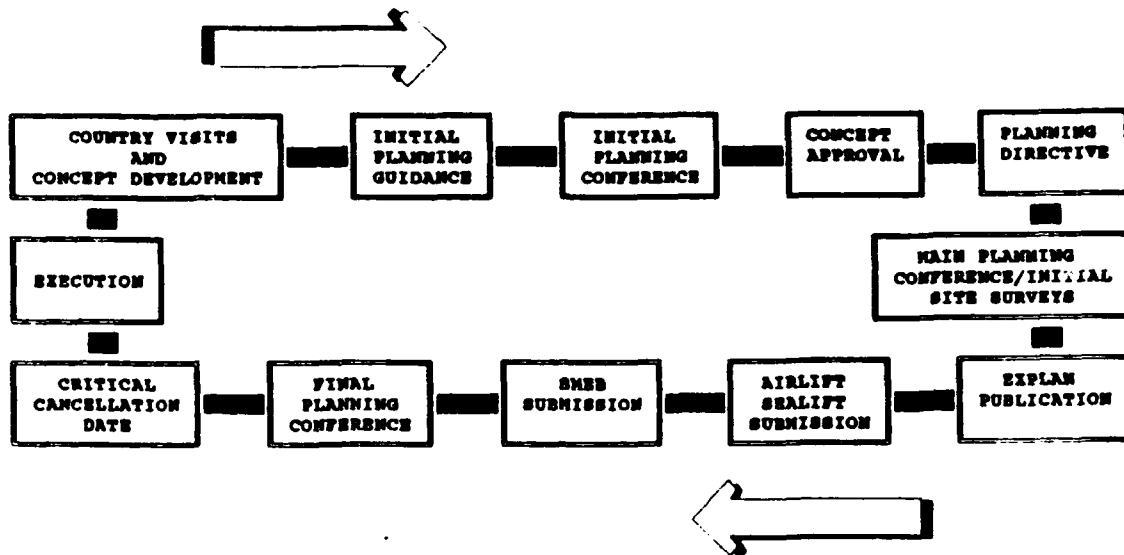


Figure 3

In this manner, joint training was related to command missions and essential joint and/or combined operational tasks. Evaluation of the training reflected the ability to execute those tasks and was documented in the CINC's Preparedness and Assessment Report (CSPAR). The joint training process was completed when identified deficiencies determined future budget and scheduling priorities.⁷

PRE-DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM EXERCISES

Prior to Desert Shield/Desert Storm, USCENTCOM had some level of exercise program with about half of the 18 nations in the AOR. Planning for exercises in each of these countries generally followed an established sequence which included: concept development and approval; issuance of initial planning guidance and a

planning directive; conduct of initial, main and final planning conferences; publication of an exercise plan; confirmation of airlift and sealift requirements; submission of a Significant Military Exercise Brief (SMEB), if applicable; selection of a critical cancellation date; and exercise execution and evaluation.

The normal procedure for AOR exercises was to task either Headquarters (HQ) CENTCOM or one of the component headquarters to establish a JTF to execute the exercise. Usually, the component with the bulk of troops or forces in the exercise was given this tasking. All other participating components then provided JTF HQ augmentation. This process, beside resulting in a long string of successful and valuable exercises, created a nucleus of staff officers who:

- (1) had travelled extensively in the AOR;
- (2) were experienced in negotiations with numerous AOR countries;
- (3) had established professional and personal relationships with host nation officials;
- (4) were experienced in joint planning and execution;
- (5) were aware of the desert and maritime environmental impact on operations; and
- (6) were familiar with the military operational and logistic regional infrastructure.

While the core of this staff exercise nucleus resided in the J-3 Exercise Division (J3-E), the cumulative expertise was disbursed throughout exercise planning cells in all directorates of each

headquarters. These highly skilled people were to play an important role in Desert Storm preparations.

While all these AOR exercises were valuable in their own right, the keystone exercise was BRIGHT STAR. This fully integrated air, ground, and naval joint and combined exercise centered in Egypt, and incorporating under its umbrella a number of smaller subordinate exercises in other AOR countries, demonstrated more than any other evolution, the value of CENTCOM's exercise program. It provided a significant U.S. military presence in the region for an extended period of time. Additionally, multiple joint task forces responsible for subordinate exercises reported directly to HQ USCENTCOM, furnishing a wealth of experience in command and control of joint operations.

There was no attempt in any of these exercises to force U.S. doctrine upon any host nation military. Instead, the effort was directed towards enabling multiple national military forces to operate in conjunction, while employing their own doctrine, to accomplish common military goals and objectives. The assumption was that successful peacetime exercises would enhance the ability to prevail in war. This was to become clearly evident almost a year later during Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Not all of CENTCOM's exercises were conducted in the AOR. Two major exercises were conducted regularly in the Continental United States (CONUS) and, in their own way, contributed tremendously to CENTCOM's eventual success against Iraq. The first of these, GALLANT EAGLE, was a Field Training Exercise (FTX) conducted in the

southwestern United States. Focused on joint operations in a theater campaign, its contributions were more than adequately described earlier by General Horner.

The second exercise was a CPX, INTERNAL LOOK. The 1990 version, INTERNAL LOOK-90 (IL-90), turned out to be fortuitous. Executed in July, it examined plans for the defense of Saudi Arabia against a regional threat. The exercise concluded on 28 July and Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait five days later on 2 August. The Secretary of Defense's "Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict" Interim Report to Congress describes how valuable this single exercise was.

"In the fall of 1989 we shifted the focus of planning efforts in Southwest Asia to countering regional threats to the Arabian peninsula. The primary such threat was Iraq. As a result, CENTCOM prepared a Concept Plan to this effect in the Spring of 1990. The Concept Plan contained both the overall forces and strategy for a successful defense. This plan was in the final stages of review in July 1990. In conjunction with the update of his plans, CINCCENT had arranged to conduct a major exercise, INTERNAL LOOK 90, which began in July. This exercise included wargaming aspects of the plan for the defense of Southwest Asia. When the decision was made to deploy forces in response to King Fahd's invitation, this plan was selected as the best option. It gave CENTCOM a head start."⁸

Exactly how much of a head start it provided was to become clear as the Desert Shield deployment began. IL 90, perhaps more than any other single exercise, significantly increased USCENTCOM's readiness to respond to Iraq's invasion quickly, harmoniously and systematically. U.S. forces deployed to initial operating locations envisioned and exercised in IL 90. It confirmed CENTCOM's crisis action Standing Operating Procedure (SOP),

refreshed the participants understanding of the unique environmental aspects of the AOR and the threat, and operationally focused all commanders and their staffs. More importantly, lessons learned during IL 90 directly and substantially influenced the Desert Shield/Desert Storm organization for combat, and defined theater objectives and military strategy. In particular IL 90:

- tested and validated an AOR air defense concept;
- exercised a Joint/Combined ATO similar to that used during Desert Storm;
- demonstrated the probable need for additional forces prior to the initiation of offensive ground combat;
- provided an opportunity to examine component (ARCENT/MARCENT) boundary issues facilitating the early designation of component defensive sectors;
- suggested potential munitions shortfalls; and
- identified a need for command and control restructuring.

In short, the value of IL 90 to Desert Shield/Desert Storm planners was almost incalculable. In the words of one exercise planner, "Little did we realize that when we named the opposing force in INTERNAL LOOK 90, "Hariyga Min Samaa" (Fire from Heaven), we would actually be describing the Desert Storm Air Campaign."

As mentioned earlier, the hub of exercise planning, execution and evaluation at CENTCOM was J-3E, supported by the exercise

cells, branches or divisions of the other headquarters directorates. While recognizing that all these exercise experts played important and key roles throughout Headquarters, USCENTCOM during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, for simplicity J3-E will be used as an illustration of how this body of talented people were employed. With the first intelligence indications that a crisis might be brewing, the CENTCOM Crisis Action Team (CAT) was activated to monitor the developing situation. With the exception of a small group retained in the division to continue routine, on-going activities, the exercise division stood down and J3-E personnel were promptly drafted to augment staffing of the CAT. Team positions filled by these people included the CAT Director, Team Chief, Team Executive Officer, and Air, Ground and Navy Desk officers. Their expertise, knowledge and recent experience in IL 90 enabled them to make a tremendous contribution to CENTCOM's ability to monitor and respond to the developing crisis situation while simultaneously carrying out normal day-to-day functions.

DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM

The contribution of these exercise personnel was a continuing one. On 7 August, with Saudi King Fahad's approval of a U.S. force response, a forward headquarters element was deployed from Tampa, Florida to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Tasked with establishing a headquarters for USCINCCENT and his staff, this element included several J3-E personnel. These servicemen continued to make a

contribution outside their usual sphere of influence. Acting in various capacities they helped establish an initial Crisis Action Cell (CAC) which:

- monitored and reported to HQ USCENTCOM the status of force deployment;
- developed, in conjunction with Saudi officers, initial plans for the defense of Saudi Arabia;
- informed USCINCENT of situational developments;
- coordinated and monitored activities of component command forward headquarters elements; and
- briefed the Saudi and U.S. Joint Staffs daily on the status of force deployment and defense planning.

Simultaneously, they helped design and build both a Joint Operations Center (JOC) and the Coalition, Coordination, Communication, and Integration Center (C3IC) (Figures 4 & 5). Both of these entities were, in essence, information management facilities. That is, they gathered information, displayed that information for decision makers via briefings, status charts, maps, etc. and relayed decisions to field commanders. Although similar in design and manning, they, in fact, performed slightly different functions. The JOC was ultimately to provide General Schwarzkopf the ability to command and control coalition air, ground and sea forces in battle and was in the command chain. The C3IC, after much discussion, debate and hard work, became a combined center that facilitated coordination between Islamic and U.S. forces. Its

[illegible]

As the Desert Shield force deployment continued, more J3-E personnel arrived in Riyadh and went to work in the JOC. Eventually, as they had in Tampa, they occupied key slots as JOC Director, Team Chief, Executive Officer, ground, air and naval desk officers,

Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of the Command Center and Deputy Director C3IC. By the commencement of Desert Storm, they also augmented the J-3 Plans Division. Those left in Tampa filled many of the same positions in the CAT of what became HQ USCENTCOM Rear. These

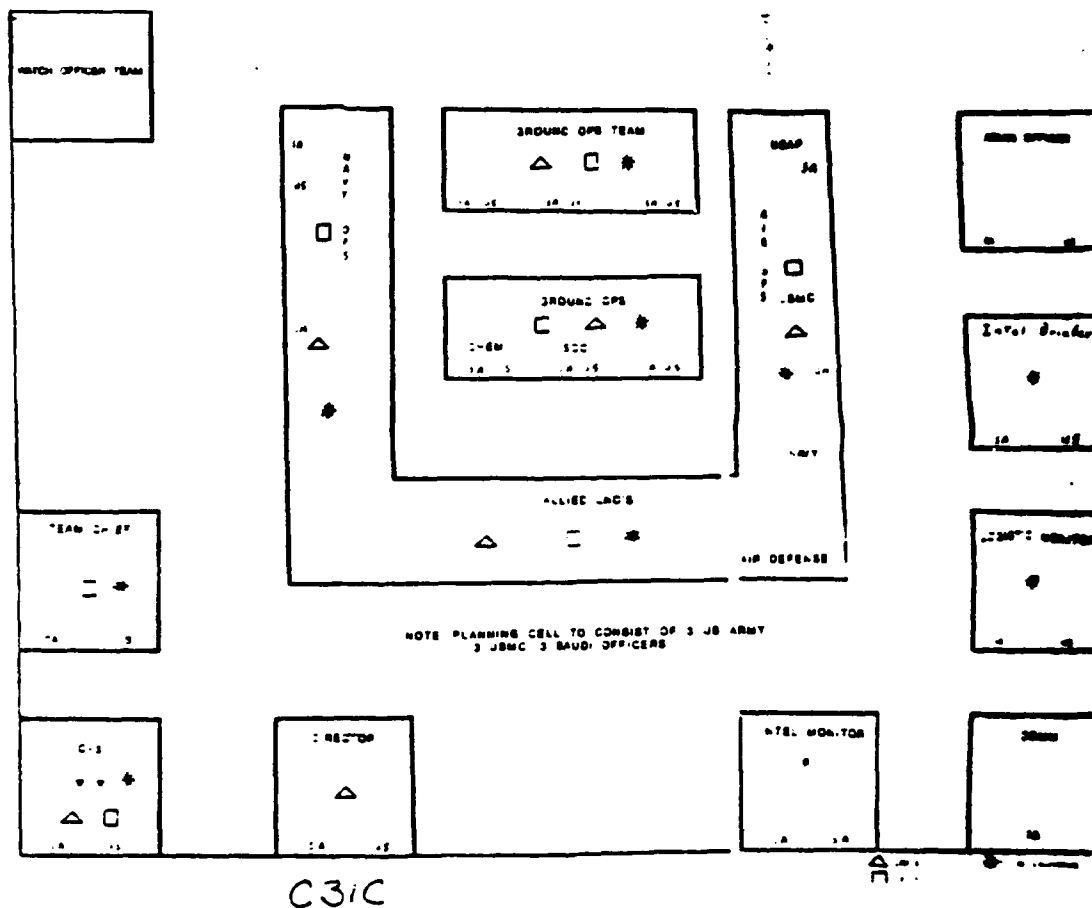


Figure 5

peacetime exercise planners provided a source of skilled individuals who possessed significant AOR experience and unique competence in joint operations which enabled the JOC, the CAT and the C3IC to carry on twenty-four hour per day extended operations.

Not only did CENTCOM exercise personnel occupy pivotal roles during these early critical days, but the same proved to be true of the component headquarters as well. For example, the forward deployed ARCENT Operations Director (G-3) had been, prior to Desert Shield, that commands principle exercise planner. The same was true of the CENTAF Director of Operations (DO). Furthermore, when a U.S. Air Force deployment support facility was built in Egypt, the Air Force OIC was the same officer who had built a similar complex at the same site just months earlier in support of BRIGHT STAR. He commented later that the job was made much easier by the fact that they had already done it once, knew all the potential problem areas, and had professional and personal relationships with the people who could resolve issues.

As force deployment continued, each of the components began conducting unit training. While these efforts were extremely valuable, it was soon recognized that, at some point, uni-service training had to be supplemented with some kind of joint exercise and training program. Consequently, on 7 October, a small group of officers and enlisted exercise people (five officers and one enlisted man) were withdrawn from operational positions and were directed to stand up the exercise division in Riyadh with the intent of developing both a HQ CENTCOM exercise/training program and a joint/combined exercise program that would address the need to practice what might eventually have to be done. During the next three months this small cell was kept very busy with exercise initiatives such as:

- DESERT SHIELD Map Exercise (MAPEX)
- IMMINENT THUNDER
- IMMEDIATE EFFORT
- C3IC Communication Exercise (COMMEX)
- USCINCENT Commanders' Conference
- EAGER INITIATIVE
- HQ CENTCOM Training Program
- Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS)

The first step in reestablishing a USCENCOM sponsored joint/combined exercise program was to conduct a series of visits to the various components to determine the status of their service efforts and how to best fold these all into a CENTCOM initiative. ARCENT, MARCENT, CENTAF, SOCCENT and NAVCENT had, through their own agencies and relationships with Saudi counterparts, developed and were pursuing aggressive and well developed training schedules. For example, both MARCENT and ARCENT had negotiated and developed both maneuver training areas and live fire ranges. NAVCENT was conducting a series of training evolutions called MIRROR IMAGE during which their strike aircraft flew routes, practiced tactics and rehearsed the in-flight refueling anticipated in event of war.

Desert Shield MAPEX. The MAPEX, directed by General Schwarzkopf, had as its purpose the analysis of U.S. defense plans in order to ensure full understanding of the commander's intent and to facilitate continued planning. The methodology used was a series of briefings presented by component and key ground force commanders down to division level. Each commander's briefing of the defense

plans of its force was followed by discussion, and direct coordination and integration of his plans with those of adjacent and supporting commanders.

CENTAF was ahead of everyone in joint/combined training, conducting strike package evolutions involving U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine and Navy and allied aircraft. Since each component had a number of well planned initiatives underway, it was decided that the quickest, easiest and least disruptive manner in which to proceed was to roll these all up into one exercise, IMMINENT THUNDER, to build on what had already been accomplished rather than to start from scratch.

IMMINENT THUNDER. IMMINENT THUNDER (Figure 6) was CENTCOM's first theater level, joint/combined, fully integrated, air, ground and naval exercise during Desert Shield with all components participating. A multi-national effort as well, the objectives were to enhance joint/combined training and to promote the interoperability of all friendly/coalition forces. "Spotlighted by the media and watched around the world," IMMINENT THUNDER established the foundation for future efforts.⁹

IMMEDIATE EFFORT. As the USCENTCOM theater of operations continued to mature, the chances for a significant crisis, short of an all out Iraqi attack, included such possibilities as terrorist attacks, missile strikes, or selected SOF/naval or air attacks. A crisis response mini-exercise series (small command post exercises)

called IMMEDIATE EFFORT was designed and conducted to provide a forum to examine these options and other feasible Iraqi attack options/activities. These exercises were used to train the CENTCOM staff and to execute and refine its crisis response Standing Operating Procedures (SOP).

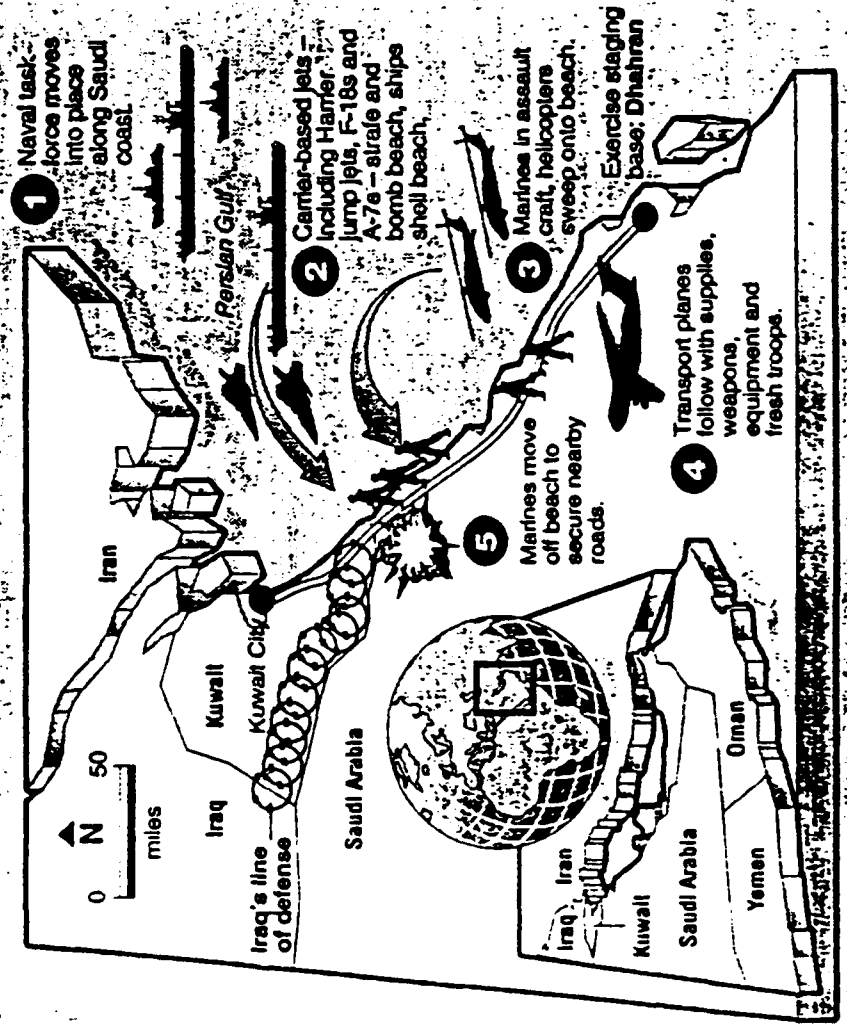
C3IC COMMEX. As mentioned earlier, the C3IC was designed and initially manned by exercise personnel. Eventually most were phased out and other representatives from HQ USCENTCOM and its components joined members of the Saudi military in manning this coordination and communication facility. Since the C3IC had been created from "scratch," the coordination and communication capabilities for coalition forces remained, for a period of time, untested. His Royal Highness, Prince, Lieutenant General Khalid requested U.S. assistance in developing a communications exercise to examine information flow and connectivity between the C3IC and coalition forces including Saudi, French, Egyptian and Syrian forward command posts.

USCINCENT'S Commander's Conference. Originally envisioned as a computer assisted wargame conference to analyze Operations Plan (OPLAN) development prior to execution, it was eventually conducted in much the same manner as the Desert Shield MAPEX. This time, however, General Schwarzkopf did all the talking, laying out in detail for his subordinate commanders the details of an offensive campaign that was to become Operation Desert Storm.

Iraq condemns U.S. exercise

Marines make a practice run

In an upcoming exercise that observers say sends a message to Iraq's President Saddam Hussein, 2,000 Marines will land on a Saudi Arabian beach, near the Saudi-Kuwait border. The plan:



By Juan J. Walte
USA TODAY

Iraq said Wednesday a planned amphibious assault exercise by U.S. Marines near Kuwait was provocative and proved Washington was preparing for war.

"This is a clear provocative act that exposes... the American aggressive intentions against Iraq," the Iraqi News Agency quoted an official spokesman as saying.

The Pentagon has denied that the Marine beach assault exercise in Saudi Arabia is meant to antagonize Iraq.

"I don't see how in the world you could describe them as provocative," said Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams.

"Clearly, the deployment and some other steps that the administration has taken is intended to emphasize the message that Saddam Hussein should take his forces out of Kuwait," he added.

But the Pentagon would not comment on a Washington Times report that the Marines will storm ashore from ships in the Persian Gulf just 10 miles south of the southern border of Kuwait, invaded by Iraq Aug. 2.

No date has been released for the exercise.

This will be the third beach-landing exercise on the Arabi-

an Peninsula — two others were in Oman — involving Marines and U.S. air forces since Desert Shield got under way.

In other developments, summit talk dominated the region this week after Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev sent two envoys to show support for an Arab solution to the crisis.

Morocco's King Hassan proposed an emergency Arab summit as a last chance for peace since Iraq's invasion.

But prospects for a summit were dealt two major blows Wednesday when:

► Saudi Arabia said that talks would be a waste of time until Iraq pulled out of Kuwait.

► Iraq said it wanted Arab leaders to scrap resolutions adopted at a Cairo summit eight days after its invasion.

The resolutions, adopted by 12 of 21 Arab League members, called for a pan-Arab military force to be sent to the gulf and demanded Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

An Arab summit was considered unlikely before January — widely regarded as a possible date for military action against Iraq.

Contributing: Laurence Jolidon in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

EAGER INITIATIVE. A follow-on to IMMINENT THUNDER, EAGER INITIATIVE was to be a second USCINCCENT sponsored component/allied exercise. Its purpose was to take advantage of the lessons learned during IMMINENT THUNDER to further flush out anticipated real world procedures and interface issues between U.S. and coalition forces. Planned and coordinated in detail, it was never conducted due to commencement of Operation Desert Storm.

HQ CENTCOM Training Program. During peacetime the training of individuals is a service responsibility. Consequently, the level of training devoted to individual self-defense or battlefield survival skills varied significantly. Two officers were therefore tasked to design, coordinate and supervise a training program for CENTCOM HQs personnel. Intended to provide a common basic standard of combat survival training across the staff, in a period of about one month it trained in excess of 1100 service people in NBC defense, combat first aid, anti-terrorism procedures and weapons familiarization.

JULLS. It was recognized early on that Desert Shield/Desert Storm would constitute the largest single deployment of U.S. military forces in history. Capturing lessons learned would certainly be valuable for any future such effort. The JULLS system, used up until now at CENTCOM primarily in support of exercises, resided in J3-E. Thus the new exercise cell was tasked with placing a system in effect to solicit, evaluate and input

appropriate joint lessons learned into JULLS. This effort commenced immediately after the initial deployments, continued throughout Desert Shield/Desert Storm and culminated in the publication of the USCINCCENT Desert Shield/Desert Storm After-Action Report. This report included some 500 joint lessons learned derived from over 1500 that were originally submitted.

These and other exercise efforts conducted during Desert Shield spotlighted the importance of joint/combined exercises in preparing forces for combat. The short notice given forces to deploy in support of Operation Desert Shield underscored the need for a joint/combined exercise plan early in the deployment to ensure that joint operational procedures are established, tested and adjusted prior to the commencement of combat/hostilities. They all met their objectives, which were to increase joint/combined warfighting capabilities without unduly adding to component workload.

This exercise cell was tasked with a number of collateral studies as well, and as late as 14 January 1991, J3-E personnel were working a number of tasks for the USCINCCENT. They included:

- Alternate Command Post
- Continuity of Operations Plan
- Battle Management Working Group (BMWG)
- Succession to Command
- Critical Information Flow

On 15 January these officers returned to their duties in the various divisions within J-3, and the Exercise Division once again stood down. As before, during Desert Storm, the special skills of these individuals were put to good use in the JOC and in the Battle Management Working Group (BMWG). Also, two of their number were sent to several coalition countries to brief their heads of state on the scope and success of the air campaign in preparation for the ground war.

Clearly joint and combined exercises contributed to the success of Desert Shield/Desert Storm. A logical follow-on question would be, could the U.S. and its coalition have prevailed in the conflict without any or all of these exercise activities. The answer to that question is yes, but not as efficiently or as effectively and with as few losses as was done. The Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict, Final Report to Congress said it clearly.

"Combined and Joint Exercises

Large scale exercises provide an opportunity to synchronize maneuver and support forces in realistic, stressful situations. Short of combat, exercises are the best method to determine training and readiness strengths and weaknesses. Often, exercises involve operations at the centers discussed in the section on training or in environments similar to the ones in which forces are expected to fight. In recent years, several training initiatives, including exercises and deployments, were designed to present challenges similar to those involved in moving troops and materiel enormous distances. Many involved major multinational training commitments which, as mentioned previously, helped develop the procedures that facilitated combined operations during the crisis. A discussion of some of these exercises will underscore this point.

One of the more important training exercises during the 1980s was the Gallant Eagle series. These war games involved large scale air, land, and sea maneuvers in California and Nevada. They were designed to simulate the rapid intervention of U.S. forces to help an allied nation repel an invasion force.

U.S. forces also have participated in combined and joint exercises in the Gulf region for several years. The major exercise in the region was Bright Star, conducted in Fiscal Years 83, 85, 87, and 90. Bright Star is a large scale deployment exercise with U.S. forces deployed to Egypt, Oman, Jordan, Somalia, and Kenya. Major participants include Army Component, Central Command and Air Force Component, Central Command. USMC participation has included all levels of MAGTFs: Marine Expeditionary Units conducting amphibious landings; Maritime Prepositioning Force brigades unloading equipment and supplies; a Marine Expeditionary Force command element participating in CPS as well as deployment exercises (e.g. Bright Star). All units were combined and a full range of training was conducted. CVBGs also participated at sea and with strikes ashore. For example, the USS SARATOGA (CV 60) Battle Group participated in Bright Star 87. Several small scale SOF deployment exercises to SWA also have been conducted during the past several years. In addition, CENTCOM periodically has conducted training exercises in the continental United States using a SWA scenario. An example of this sort of exercise was Exercise Internal Look 90 discussed earlier.

One of the more important joint and combined exercises instrumental in preparing U.S. forces is the annual Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercise. Although focused on a completely different part of the world, REFORGER exercises provided an opportunity to test doctrinal and tactical concepts. Many RC elements were mobilized and deployed as they would be under actual crisis conditions. Of equal importance, forces gained experience deploying under tight time schedules, in shipping equipment by air and sea, and in operating with prepositioned equipment. Strategic lift systems were used as were

deployment management systems. In all, REFORGER provided large scale training for the requirements of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Other important exercises included multi-CVBG training exercises including FleetEx, Northern Wedding, and PacEx. While these were conducted outside of the CENTCOM area of operations, they played an important role in developing multi-carrier battle group operations, tactics, and skills."¹⁰

POST-DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM

Upon the end of the war, even before the ink was dry on the U.N. sponsored cease-fire agreement, General Schwarzkopf directed an analysis which was to lead to a new CENTCOM strategy. This analysis began with a review of America's broad national security interests listed here:

- Survival of U.S. as a free nation;
- Healthy economy;
- Healthy relations with friends; and
- A stable and secure world

These interests lead to national military objectives which with the demise of the Soviet Union, are now modified to reflect a regional vice global policy.

- Deter or defeat aggression in concert with our allies;
- Ensure global access and influence;
- Promote regional stability and cooperation;
- Stem flow of illegal drugs; and
- Combat terrorism.

Based on these national objectives, CENTCOM developed the following list of objectives which strive to increase regional stability and reduce the potential for threats against U.S. vital interests.

- Strengthen regional stability;
- Preserve access to oil;
- Assist friendly states to defend themselves;
- Deter operations hostile to U.S. vital interests;
- Reduce threat of terrorism;
- Stem flow of illegal drugs; and
- Prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

These regional objectives were the guide for developing CENTCOM's post-Desert Storm strategy. It should look familiar since the post Desert Storm peacetime strategy is based on the same three pillars as the pre-Desert Storm strategy: forward presence, combined exercises and security assistance. Again, combined exercises were seen as allowing CENTCOM and its allies to understand their mutual capabilities and shortfalls and are a key factor in developing and maintaining close relations, showing presence, and gaining access to regional facilities. More importantly, combined exercises bolster each host nation's capabilities and confidence in America's commitment to regional stability. Furthermore, they provide opportunities to increase the ability of all forces to work together in a coalition environment. These exercises take on added importance when they are conducted with nations whose security assistance has been reduced or curtailed.¹¹

The post-Desert Storm popularity of combined exercises between the U.S. and nations within the AOR are evidenced by a 600% increase in post-Desert Storm exercises over the pre-Desert Shield norm (Figure 7).

FY 92 EXERCISE			
EXERCISE NAME	ORGANIZATION	DATE	STATUS
IRIS GOLD I	SOCCENT	NOV91	CO
IMPELLING VICTORY	CENTAF	JAN92	SQ(-)
IMPENDING GLORY	SOCCENT	JAN92	(CO)
IRIS GOLD II	SOCCENT	FEB92	CO
IMPRESSIVE PARTNER	CENTAF	FEB92	SQ(-)
ELLIPSE FOXTROT	CENTCOM	FEB92	TBD
IMMENSE DRIVE	ARCENT	APR92	(CO)
EARNEST LEADER	ARCENT	APR92	BN(-)
EASTERN CASTLE	CENTCOM	APR92	CO(+)
INDIGO DESERT	SOCCENT	MAY92	(CO)
IRON COBRA	CENTAF	JUN92	SQ(-)
INHERENT FURY	SOCCENT	JUN92	(CO)
EASTERN EAGLE	SOCCENT	AUG92	(CO)
EAGLE TALON	CENTAF	AUG92	SQ(-)
INITIAL LINK 92	CENTAF	AUG92	SQ(-)
NATIVE FURY	NAVCENT	AUG92	BN(-)

Figure 7

Unfortunately, while the demand, popularity and importance of combined exercises had clearly and rapidly expanded, the assets necessary to carry them out were just as rapidly decreasing. Enroute from Riyadh to Tampa after Desert Storm, CENTCOM exercise planners stopped in Washington to confer with JCS Joint Operations and Training Division (J7-JETD) representatives. The JCS staff emphasized that CENTCOM should anticipate as much as a 50% reduction in annual exercise funding. Additionally, the service components, although eager to contribute to the exercise effort, reported that their individual services had similarly indicated

future acute funding cuts. This was particularly true of the Air Force whose proposed reductions (45% of stated requirements) would have been crippling to CENTCOM's program. Fortunately, in subsequent months, USCENTCOM has been able to maintain an aggressive exercise schedule in spite of these predictions. By using post-Desert Storm in-place forces, especially an increased Navy and Marine presence, and by working with JCS J7-JETD to obtain funding from canceled exercises such as South Korea's TEAM SPIRIT, CENTCOM has been able to meet regional expectations. Unfortunately, funding for the out years remains at risk. Even the most favorable projections indicate funding at only 60%-70% of currently stated requirements.

As alluded to earlier, the past linkage between exercise goals and objectives and JMETLS has come back to haunt exercise planners. Exercises have not been specifically singled out or targeted for funding cuts, but are expected to take proportional reductions along with other programs. In this environment, budget planners question the cost effectiveness of exercises conducted in the AOR to accomplish training objectives that could be more cheaply satisfied in CONUS. In this regard they also look at today's world and ask, "Where is the threat? If there is no threat there is no need to exercise outside CONUS." These viewpoints unfortunately ignore all the other benefits of joint/combined exercises.

Additionally, prior to the Gulf Conflict, CENTCOM occupied a unique position in the exercise community. Because the command had few in-place forces and because of the tremendous costs associated

with lifting forces into the AOR for exercises, USCINCCENT was able to successfully argue for special funding consideration. With the end of the war and with the beginning of a worldwide withdrawal of forward based U.S. forces USCENTCOM's situation has become less the exception and more the rule. Other warfighting CINCs, faced with the loss of these in-place forces must now, like CENTCOM did in the past, lift assets into a region for an exercise.

Another post-Desert Storm phenomena is the drastic increase in the number of countries worldwide, indicating a desire to participate in a military exercise program with the U.S. Recognizing the United States as the only remaining superpower and having dramatically observed, via Desert Storm, the military and diplomatic advantages of alignment with the U.S., previously hesitant countries are now enthusiastically pursuing new bilateral exercise relationships.

Looming on the horizon is a related but new and unique situation. This new challenge lies in the vast number of additional countries that may soon become eligible for participation in military exercise programs with U.S. forces. Inclusion of these former Soviet block nations will stretch projected exercise funding limits even thinner.

Thus, as OSD proposes funding cuts, requirements actually increase at an escalating rate. To a degree, some of these new requirements can be met by decreasing the size of existing exercises and shifting assets to cover new needs. Sooner or later, however, the question of relative value must be asked. At what

point do such reduced and limited exercises become non-productive? At what point must funding be increased in order to meet real requirements?

CONCLUSION

CENTCOM's joint and combined exercise program played and continues to play a pivotal role in the command's peacetime strategy. More importantly, it contributed in many both direct and indirect, as well as expected and unexpected ways. Joint and Combined exercises played a vital role in CENTCOM's preparation for war virtually right up to D-Day. Exercise personnel provided the entire command many, perhaps unanticipated, skills and capabilities that were successfully and effectively employed before, during and after Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Since the end of the war joint/combined exercises have become even more important. Both the President's National Security Strategy and the supporting Military Strategy stress the importance of collective security through expanded alliance systems designed to neutralize emerging regional threats. Even though the U.S. may be capable of acting alone to protect its vital interests, it has become increasingly apparent that, for political, more than military reasons, these conflicts will be fought by coalitions. Combined exercises provide the opportunity for potential partners to work with U.S. forces prior to such an eventuality. Twenty-three nations sent ships to Desert Shield/Desert Storm. All but two of the involved navies had exercised with the U.S. Navy in the

previous two years. This commonality of experience certainly facilitated successful maritime intercept operations in particular and Desert Shield/Desert Storm in general.

Further, the National Military Strategy stresses presence. Many countries want this U.S. presence for the political and military stability it encourages and for the diplomatic and military advantages that accompany alignment with the U.S. For internal political reasons, however, many of these nations do not want U.S. basing. This factor coupled with a perceived lessening of any threat to the U.S. has resulted in a reduction of forward based forces and a correspondingly decreased American presence. Exercises effectively provide the increasingly important U.S. visibility without aggravating regional sensitivities and without the expense and vulnerability of forward basing.

The individual service's pleas of poverty, as mentioned earlier, are not new. The tension between service and CINC priorities has always existed. Goldwater-Nichols, by strengthening the CINCs, helped ensure continued support. However, in this era of severe funding and force reductions, competition between priorities is intensified. Recognizing their clearly demonstrated value, it is mandatory that joint/combined exercises be appropriately and sufficiently funded and resourced. To do otherwise would significantly weaken and reduce the influence and access currently available to U.S. forces in the world, an eventuality this nation can ill afford. Simultaneously, CINCs and their exercise planners must continue, as has CENTCOM, to find new, imaginative and more

cost effective means to carry out their exercise programs in support of both theater and national strategies. In place forces, rotating forces, smaller more frequent exercises all provide opportunities. Exercise planners who understand the tremendous advantages emanating from joint/combined exercises bear the responsibility of assisting and supporting their CINCs as proponents. Only they, working hand-in-hand with JCS planners, can educate OSD staffers and encourage a broader perspective and understanding of the importance of joint/combined exercises among competing priorities.

It is tempting, in a paper such as this, to claim that joint and combined exercises were absolutely essential to CENTCOM's success in Desert Shield/Desert Storm; that without the exercises and exercise personnel previously discussed CENTCOM would have failed to achieve its mission. That was never the intent of this paper and would, at best, be impossible to prove. The military profession is as much, if not more, an art than a science. Some things, like the value and impact of exercises, do not lend themselves to analytical measurement. In such cases the instinctual professional judgment and experience of decision makers must be relied upon. The judgments of three such key decision makers, Secretary of Defense Cheney, General Schwarzkopf and General Horner, have been used, throughout this paper, to illustrate the intrinsic value of exercises.

How is the feeling of confidence ingendered in the minds of foreign leaders by the presence of U.S. exercise forces arithmeti-

Glossary

AOR - Area of Responsibility

Arabian Gulf - Same as Persian Gulf

ATO - Air Tasking Order

CAC - Crisis Action Cell

CAT - Crisis Action Team

CCJ3 - Operations Directorate, U.S. Central Command

CCJ3-E - Exercise Division, Operations Directorate, U.S. Central Command

CINC - Commander-in-Chief

COMMEX - Communications Exercise

CONUS - Continental United States

CPX - Command Post Exercise

CSPAR - CINC's Preparedness and Assessment Report

C3IC - Coalition, Coordination, Communication and Integration Center

DO - Director of Operations

Earnest Will - U.S. escort of reflagged Kuwaiti shipping and those of other Free World nations who requested assistance during passage of the Arabian Gulf.

FTX - Field training exercise

G-3 - Operations Officer (Army and Marine Corps General Staffs)

HQ - Headquarters

IL-90 - Exercise INTERNAL LOOK 90

JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff

JMETL - Joint Military Essential Task List

JOC - Joint Operations Center

JTF - Joint Task Force

cally measured and reduced to a graphic representation? How is the commonality of experience created by bilateral or multilateral exercises measured and reduced to a matrix? The answer is that they aren't. A mathematical analysis of the role of joint and combined exercises in USCENTCOM's peacetime strategy and preparation for war was not the purpose of this paper. Rather, the intent has been to educate, alert and advise. Aimed at first-time joint staff officers and specifically future exercise planners, this paper's intent, using USCENTCOM as an example, was to educate by describing the significant contribution that can be made by exercise programs. Its purpose was to alert by describing how future exercise programs are at risk as a result of projected funding reductions. Finally, its purpose to advise by suggesting that the responsibility for future exercise proponentcy lies with those people who will plan, execute and evaluate them for their CINCs. They must understand the intrinsic value of exercises and articulate that value to planners who march to the beat of the "budget drummer" and are thus inclined to respond to entirely different priorities. There is an old saying. It goes:

For the want of a nail the shoe was lost,
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost,
For the want of a horse the rider was lost,
For the want of a rider the battle was lost,
For the want of a battle the kingdom was lost--
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.¹⁴

Could exercises have been the nail? Perhaps so - perhaps not!

JTFME - Joint Task Force Middle East. U.S. Naval forces that operated out of Bahrain prior to Desert Shield.

JTP - Joint Training Plan

JULLS - Joint Universal Lessons Learned System

J3-E - Exercise Division, Operations Directorate, U.S. Central Command

J7-JETD - Joint Exercise and Training Division of the JCS Operational Plans and Interoperability Directorate

MAPEX - Map Exercise

NBC - Nuclear, Biological and Chemical

OIC - Officer-in-Charge

OSD - Office of the Secretary of Defense

OPLAN - Operations Plan

Persian Gulf - Same as Arabian Gulf

RDJTF - Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force

SLOCs - Sea Lines of Communication

SMEB - Significant Military Exercise Brief. A pre-exercise report required by JCS of any exercise that is because of size, planned activities or political impact, of special interest to the Washington, D.C. defense community.

SOF - Special Operations Forces

SOP - Standing Operating Procedures

SWA - Southwest Asia

U.S. - United States

USCENTCOM - U.S. Central Command

USCINCENT - Commander in Chief, United States Central Command

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